






Residential Gardening and Lawn Care

Many pollutants can enter stormwater systems, groundwater, and water bodies as a result of typical lawn and gardening work. Runoff that is contaminated by pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers can severely degrade receiving waters and result in toxic effects on fish and other aquatic life. Some gardening chemicals are also harmful to children and pets. Fertilizers add nutrients to water bodies causing unwanted algal blooms and other aquatic plant growth. Disposal of grass clippings and other vegetation into storm drains, stormwater ponds, roadside ditches and other water bodies can lead to decreased oxygen levels in stormwater as the vegetation decomposes. This can lead to fish kills. Decreased oxygen levels can be lethal to organisms and fish in our water bodies. Several simple practices can be used to prevent these problems, and may result in improved lawn and garden quality. These practices should also be shared with private landscapers that conduct gardening and lawn care on your property.





MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

The following BMPs, or equivalent measures, methods or practices are required if you engage in gardening and lawn care at your home.

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 1 Never apply herbicides, insecticides, rodenticides, or fungicides along banks of streams and drainage channels with flowing water, or shores of lakes and wetlands. These chemicals must never be applied if it is raining.
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 2 Manually or mechanically remove weeds and other pests rather than using pesticides, especially in areas of running or standing water.
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 3 Store all bags or piles of fertilizers and containers of pesticides in a covered location such as a garden shed.
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 4 Do not sweep or dump grass clippings, leaves, or twigs into the street, drainage ditch, or stormwater facility or pond.
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 5 Store piles of beauty bark and other erodible materials on lawns or other pervious areas. If these materials are stored on impervious surfaces such

as driveways, cover with a tarp so that rainwater does not wash the materials into storm drains or ditches.

OTHER OPTIONS AND TIPS

-  Purchase and use the least amount of pesticides necessary and always follow the manufacturer's directions for application. If possible, use pest control measures that do not require chemicals.
-  Compost your yard wastes, or use yard waste as mulch in your yard or garden. Contact your local garbage hauler to see if a yard waste pick up service is available.
-  Educate yourself about alternatives to chemical pesticides and fertilizers, and about integrated pest management techniques. The Local Hazardous Waste Management Program can provide you with alternatives. Their phone number is 206-296-4692.
-  Limit the amount of lawn and garden watering so that surface runoff does not leave your property. Check automatic sprinkler systems to assure water is dispersed to landscaped areas and not to hard surfaces such as driveways and sidewalks.

For more information or assistance in implementing these best management practices, contact the King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks Stormwater Services Section at 206-296-1900.